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The cover illustration was  
drawn and kindly donated by  
Joan Law-Smith.

KEY TO GARLAND (clockwise)

*Lilium canadense*  
*Primula auricula*  
*Fuchsia magellanica*  
*Hedera*  
*Campanula burghaltii*  
*Narcissus*  
*Adiantum aethiopicum*  
*Ipomea 'Heavenly Blue'*  
*Lilium canadense*  
*Fragaria vesca*  
*Rosa Reine les Violettes*  
*Rosa Souvenir de la Malmaison*  
*Rosa Nevada*  
*Campanula Bellflower*  
*Geranium*  
*Dianthus caesius*  
*Adiantum aethiopicum* The Cheddar Pink  
*Endymion hispanicus*  
*Dianthus Murray's Laced Pink*  
*Fuchsia magellanica*  
*Hedera Silver Queen*

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## Editorial

We begin this *Journal* with the beginning. Peter Valder's article 'Who discovered our plants?' traces with wit the first European botanical voyeurs from Abel Tasman to Robert Brown. Joseph Banks plays a large part and, of course, his partner the Swede, Daniel Solander, who died two hundred years ago. Solander studied under Linnaeus, edited his *Elementa Botanica* and promoted Linnaeus' system of classification during his post as assistant librarian at the British Museum. At 35 he was invited by Joseph Banks to join the scientific staff of the *Endeavour*, and on his return, he became amongst other things, Banks' secretary, librarian and friend. It was at Banks' house in Soho Square, that haven of herbariums and books, that Solander died on 13th May 1782.

Rosemary Polya has undertaken extensive research into Australian nursery catalogues, not only in Australia but in the United States and England as well. The importance of old catalogues in the historically accurate restoration of old gardens cannot be overstressed. I was fascinated to discover Nobelius, who I had only known as an orchardist at Freshwater Point on the River Tamar, was leading a double life in the other colonies.

We have two articles on 'Eryldene'; one by its present curator Mary Davis and one by its creator Professor E.G. Waterhouse. 'Eryldene' is a delightful fusion of the owner's interest in Camellias and Hardy Wilson's feeling for Colonial architecture whose form and rhythm he felt was quite oriental. He describes one Colonial garden with obvious delight: "The stone flagged paths bordered with box and rows of red China roses; the tall camellias placed side-by-side, and violets in their shade; the bushy tree-box like sentinels at the corners of wild paths overhung with pomegranates; old Saffrona rose gnarled and fragrant before the windows, and sweet-bay close beside the walls. There are blue periwinkles in the shadow of olives over by the fences, and oleanders reaching out from the olives for sight of the sun; and at their feet the long grasses where purple flags and oxalis bloom".

We are extremely fortunate to have been given permission to reprint the Beechworth Cemetery Study. The introduction gives an historical overview. How peaceful the cemetery of the Middle Ages, symbolising paradise and warding off evil spirits. Living for some years in the vicinity of London's old Highgate Cemetery my reaction to graveyards has until recently been influenced more by the burial of murderers between 9 p.m. and midnight than paradise. My attitude changed last month during a visit to Zeehan, a shrinking mining town on Tasmania's west coast. The Zeehan graveyard is some distance from the town and situated on three hillocks (possibly of different denominations). It is isolated on a plain with distant hills, and very serene. Unfortunately, bushfires swept through it last year leaving strange collections of black stumps around the headstones and along the main paths, but I noticed blue bells beginning to flower.

If anyone knows of other landscape studies which could be reproduced in the *Journal* please let us know. We appeal to members to send in articles or illustrations. We would like particularly to see contributions from owners of interesting gardens or collections of plant material, as members possess much information of value to other gardeners but are often too modest to put it down on paper. The *Journal* and *Newsletter* are the main means of communication in a society such as ours whose members are widely scattered. We need contributions in order to continue our publishing programme.

It might be of interest to members that the *Journal of the Australian Garden History Society* is being indexed in the *Architectural Periodicals Index*.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Miranda Morris-Nunn.



JOSEPH BANKS (1773) by Sir Joshua Reynolds.  
Joseph Banks was 27 when he set sail on the  
*Endeavour*. This portrait was painted on his  
return, when he was 31.

## Who Discovered our Plants?

### THE EARLY YEARS OF BOTANICAL EXPLORATION IN AUSTRALIA

P.G. VALDER.

If any of us were blindfolded, taken round the world, then deposited somewhere in Australia again and the blindfold removed, we probably would have little difficulty in knowing where we were. This is because the Australian landscape is so characteristic. Chiefly responsible for this are our remarkable plants. At least 85 per cent of our 20,000 or so plants occur nowhere else, many of them being unlike anything found in the northern hemisphere.

The first people to see these plants were the Aborigines, who arrived from the north at least 40,000 years ago. They came to know the plants of their new home well, since directly or indirectly they depended on them for their survival. While they had no agriculture or domesticated animals they learned to live with and, to a certain extent, manage their environment.

The first European to record any observations about our plants seems to have been Abel Tasman, who discovered Tasmania during a spell of nasty weather in 1642. Writing in his journal he reported the presence of tall trees with notches cut in them so far apart that he assumed the climbers, whom he didn't see, to be giants. Amongst the curiosities brought back to his ships was some gum, which had been found oozing from the trees. On this evidence it seems almost certain that Tasman's journal contains the first written reference to the eucalypts.

Forty-six years later an Englishman, William Dampier, visited north-west Australia in a party of buccaneers. As well as making some frank comments about the Aborigines and the flies, he described the vegetation, which, as Tasman had noted in Tasmania, included trees with a reddish gum oozing out of knots and cracks in the trunks.

Dampier returned to the north-west in 1699 and actually collected plant specimens, of which 23 survive in Oxford. Included amongst these is Sturt's Desert Pea, one of Australia's best-known plants.

It is known that the Dutch also collected plants in Western Australia, possibly even before Dampier, since two plants described in 1768 as ferns from Java, have turned out to be flowering plants known only from the Perth region. One was a *Synaphea*, a yellow-flowered member of the waratah family. The other was a wattle.

The discovery of the east coast of Australia is inescapably associated with the discovery of our plants, since, amongst the first party of Europeans to set foot there in 1770, were two trained botanists, Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander. So many new plants did they find, that James Cook, who had named the *Endeavour's* anchorage Stingray Harbour, later changed it to Botany Bay.

Banks and Solander, having read what Tasman and Dampier had to say, were not surprised when they too found gum oozing out of the trees. Before long they began calling them gum trees, the name by which the eucalypts are known to all Australians today. The first eucalypt specimen they collected at Botany Bay was the bloodwood but, although the bloodwood appears to be the first eucalypt to be collected in Australia, it was not the first to be given the name *Eucalyptus*.



*BANKSIA SERRATA*

From a woodcut by Margaret Preston in the collection of the School of Biological Sciences, University of Sydney. This species was collected at Botany Bay in 1770 by Joseph Banks. The genus was named in his honour by Linnaeus' son in 1781.

The specimen to which this honour was accorded was collected in Tasmania in 1777 during Cook's third voyage. It was described by a minor French aristocrat and botanist, L'Heritier, and given the name *Eucalyptus Obliqua*, just before the French Revolution. *Eucalyptus* means well-covered, in allusion to the caps on the flower buds. (L'Heritier, by the way, survived the Revolution only to be assassinated in 1800. The murder was never solved.)

For a variety of reasons Banks and Solander didn't get around to publishing the results of their expedition themselves. It seems extraordinary, for instance, that illustrations based on the drawings made on the Endeavour are only now being printed in colour for the first time, 200 years after Banks had the engraved copper plates made.

Nevertheless, Banks' influence on the continuing collection and description of the Australian flora cannot be underestimated. For a start it was largely due to his influence that a decision was made to establish a settlement in New South Wales.

Banks encouraged the early governors and officials to send him specimens and in return he offered advice and plants to assist the young colony. In 1791, in order to speed up the collection of plants for his herbarium, he employed David Burton, Superintendent of Convicts at Parramatta, to send him plants. However, David Burton's collecting career was short-lived, as he accidentally killed himself a few months later while duck shooting on the banks of the Nepean.

Banks later employed George Caley, who arrived in Sydney in 1800 and during ten years sent enormous quantities of seeds, specimens, living plants and written descriptions. Caley apparently was a particularly difficult person, so perhaps it was no accident that a rather ugly and irritable orchid was named *Caleana* in his honour.

The plants of New Holland aroused great interest in England. In 1793 Sir James Smith published a book, *A Specimen of the Botany of New Holland*, in which sixteen plants from around Port Jackson were described. The descriptions were based on plants growing in English greenhouses and specimens were sent by John White, Surgeon-General to the colony, after whom White Bay on Sydney Harbour was named. Each species was illustrated with a coloured plate based on drawings sent by White. Included were such favourites as the New South Wales Christmas Bush and the waratah.

Also in 1793, a Spanish expedition arrived in the harbour, or as they called it, Puerto Jackson. Over 1,000 plants were collected and some subsequently described by the Spanish botanist Antonio Cavanilles, including the dwarf apple, a conspicuous plant of the Sydney heathlands, to which he gave the name *Angophora*.

Western Australia's plants came in for attention once more with the arrival of George Vancouver in 1791, on his way to the west coast of North America to receive back on Britain's behalf the territories which Spain had seized. He was accompanied by the botanist and surgeon,

Archibald Menzies, who collected plants at King George Sound, including a number of seaweeds and the first eucalypt to be collected in Western Australia, the Yate.

As it happens these early explorers had strayed into areas of poor sandy soils and extraordinary botanical richness, areas in which the Australian flora is at its most distinctive. In the Sydney region alone, for instance, there are over 2,000 different plants, more than in the whole of Great Britain. And in the south west province of Western Australia there are over 4,000 species. It is in this region, isolated by the ocean to the south and west and the desert to the north and east, that the peculiar beauty of the Australian flora can perhaps best be observed.

It was not only the British and Spanish who were sending scientific expeditions to the south seas. Louis XVI, for instance, had sent La Perouse, accompanied by naturalists and other scientists. After encountering the first fleet in Botany Bay in 1788, they disappeared, so it is not known what they might have collected in Australia.

The riddle of the fate of La Perouse and the general interest in New Holland led Louis XVI to despatch another expedition, led by Admiral Bruny d' Entrecasteaux. Amongst the scientists accompanying him was the botanist, Labillardiere.

In December, 1792, they anchored for a week in Esperance Bay, Western Australia, where Labillardiere collected such plants as the scarlet *Kunzea* and the first of the kangaroo paws to be described. He also collected the same eucalypt as had Archibald Menzies, and was the first to publish a description of it, together with an illustration prepared by the renowned botanical artist Redoute. Labillardiere named this eucalypt *E. cornuta*. The epithet *cornuta* means "horned", in allusion to the long, pointed caps on the flower buds.

D'Entrecasteaux's expedition also visited Tasmania twice; on the second occasion arriving (though they didn't know it) on the day Louis XVI was guillotined. In Tasmania Labillardiere collected such well-known plants as the Tasmanian Waratah, the Tasmanian Christmas Bell and the Leatherwood, together with a wealth of other species, many of which occur well inland.

In due course Napoleon sent another lavishly-equipped expedition to southern Australia - or Terre Napoleon, Napoleon Land - as, rather alarmingly, it was called in France at the time. The expedition was led by Nicolas Baudin, who arrived off Western Australia in 1801. Amongst the scientists was the botanist, Leschenault, after whom one of Western Australia's best known genera of wildflowers, *Leschenaultia*, is named.

Leschenault appears to have been the first person to collect another now well-known Western Australian plant, the Albany Pitcher Plant, which looks like the tropical pitcher plants but is not related and is found nowhere else. This plant was subsequently named by Labillardiere

who, between 1800 and 1807, described 287 Australian plants, including a number of seaweeds and one of the best known of all Australian plants, the Tasmanian Blue Gum. His was by far the greatest published contribution to Australian botany up to this time.

Just as the plants and animals of New Holland created a minor sensation in England, so they did in France. On the return of Baudin's expedition, for instance, the Empress Josephine was offered first choice of the plants and animals, no doubt to the annoyance of the Museum of Natural History and the Botanic Garden for which they were intended. The frontispiece of the book about Baudin's voyage shows a view of her chateau, La Malmaison, with black swans, kangaroos, and the now-extinct King Island emus in the foreground. And in her extraordinary greenhouses she cultivated Australian plants, a number of which were described for the first time from her collection.

While Baudin was sailing around Australia's shores, so was another expedition which was to be of even greater botanical significance. Joseph Banks had arranged to send the botanist Robert Brown and the botanical artist Ferdinand Bauer with Matthew Flinders, who was to circumnavigate the continent. For a variety of reasons Brown and Bauer stayed on in Australia after this expedition, Brown spending a further nine months collecting in Tasmania. They returned to London in 1805 with between three and four thousand specimens and an array of drawings.

In 1810 Brown published a book on the flora of Australia, describing over 2,000 different plants, of which three-quarters were new to science. Although the book was a financial failure, Brown continued to work on the Australian flora, and in 1814, he estimated that specimens of 4,200 Australian species were available to him. Although much remained to be discovered in the inland, it was clear that the Australian flora was well on the way towards becoming properly known.

Although Brown's study of Australian plants was only part of his many-sided activities, he can justifiably be said to be the father of Australian botany, having laid the foundation upon which the subsequent investigation of our unique and fascinating flora has been based.

Ferdinand Bauer's companion work illustrating Brown's flora was also a failure and only twenty-five of his Australian drawings were published in his lifetime. As recently as 1976 a further twenty-five appeared, and it is clear that Bauer's illustrations of Australian plants rank amongst the most beautiful and accurate botanical drawings ever made.

Since Brown's time, knowledge of our plants has been continuously expanding as a result of exploration and research. Even so the Australian flora is still far from being adequately known. Few parts of Australia have been fully explored botanically and there are many groups of plants in need of further study. It is estimated that something of the order of 18,000 species has been described so far and that the Australian flora will eventually be found to contain over 25,000 species.

The Australian flora is unique and, as we see it today, it tells the story of a hundred million years of history of Australia as a southern land mass. It is a natural heritage which we should insist upon conserving.



A medallion from the frontispiece of  
Freycinet's narrative of Baudin's voyage.  
This depicts the Empress Josephine's chateau,  
La Malmaison, with black swans, emus, kangaroos  
and Australian plants brought back by the  
expedition.

An investigation of existing Australian holdings of plant nursery catalogues was undertaken after reading an article by S. Challenger<sup>I</sup> of Lincoln College, Canterbury, regarding the availability of nineteenth century New Zealand catalogues. There were a number of reasons for commencing a survey of south-east Australian catalogues.

Initially, in order that nursery catalogues might be preserved, it was necessary to compile a locations register for this fast vanishing resource. Secondly, in doing so, a bibliography could be assembled that might facilitate the study of plant introduction in Australia. Since Australia and New Zealand have experienced European settlement for a comparatively short time, we are in a unique position to monitor the nature, place and sequence of plant introduction and the resulting change to an almost untouched landscape. While traders to northern Australia from the Celebes may have introduced exotic plant materials to the Australian continent, this cannot be compared to the massive introduction of exotic species by European settlers. The Australian Aborigines may have fired forests for hunting purposes and cultivated to a slight extent in northern Australia, but this was negligible in the face of radical changes to the landscape by European settlers.

A few of the many plants that changed the nature of the countryside were exotic grasses, willows and conifers. The first settlers introduced exotic grasses in order to enhance their pastures and hence improve the condition of their stock. This process was so extensive that indigenous grasses now only appear in restricted areas.

The willow represents one of the most obvious reminders of plantings by the early colonists. Stands that now line banks of streams and rivers possibly originated from cuttings taken from a tree near Napoleon's grave at St. Helena. A labelled specimen at the Salmon Ponds in Tasmania indicates that it originated from such a cutting. At Creek Road in Hobart, Tasmania, the Derwent River, New Norfolk, Tasmania and along the Murray in Victoria, old plantings can be noted.

Conifers are often the last remains of old gardens long since disintegrated through neglect. The presence of rows of pines in the middle of Melbourne suburbia often indicates the boundaries of old properties. The conifers *Cupressus Macrocarpa* and the Monterey Pine were most probably brought across the Pacific with the gold rush traffic and were widely planted from the 1850's. They were quick-growing large plants which provided shelter and shade.

In the late eighteenth-century England, it became fashionable to plant conifers from Scotland. This trend continued in Australia, perhaps being exaggerated here because conifers are tolerant of Australia's harsh, dry conditions.

<sup>I</sup>. S. Challenger, "Early nursery catalogues: an historical resource." *New Zealand libraries* 41(4) : 107-8, 1978.

Since many of Australia's successful nurserymen had migrated from Scotland and often had gained extensive experience in Scottish nurseries, where harsh conditions had to be catered for, it is probable that they favoured plants to which they were accustomed. Thus the "English" landscape tradition was nourished by Scots nurserymen. For example, Thomas Lang, a failed nurseryman in Scotland and erstwhile librarian, established two successful nurseries after migrating to Australia: one in Melbourne and the other in Ballarat. His catalogues demonstrate an excellent range of conifers.

Examination of the nursery catalogue can indicate how the plants I've discussed were distributed and also what varieties were used after 1845. Whilst wealthy gentry such as Macarthur and MacLeay imported their own plants, the common man was dependent on the largess of neighbours and the stock of the local nurserymen.

A further reason for listing nursery catalogues is that they serve to illustrate the transition from the infant colony's survival gardening to the pleasure gardening of the 1890s. Initially settlers mainly grew herbs, vegetables, fruit trees and crops. The catalogues demonstrate this and the gradual improvement of living standards in the colony, from the earliest catalogues concentrating on economic plants to the later ones bursting at the seams with ornamental plants.

The first catalogues used botanical nomenclature extensively and were aimed at the gentry with professional gardeners. The post gold rush catalogues reflect the increasingly egalitarian nature of Australian society as the standard of living of the working man improved, the eight-hour day was won and literacy became a possibility. By the 1880s and 1890s many working men got a 'Saturday arvo' off or contrived one by working ten to eleven hours from Monday to Friday. There was now the leisure and money for the working man to dabble in gardening.

The current fashion for restoring nineteenth-century houses to their former glory provides an additional purpose for compiling a list of catalogues. In order to restore a garden in keeping with the appropriate period, lists of the appropriate plants need to be drawn up. The old plant catalogues can be then used to pinpoint the popularity of plants at specific times. Since a large number of plants are listed in the catalogues, many now unobtainable and many hard to identify because of changed classification, a thorough comprehensive listing with modern nomenclature is a difficult task to attempt. Currently there is a computer listing being prepared by Peter Lumley of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne.

The range of plants for sale was more extensive in the nineteenth century. For example, there were five bouvardias available in the late 1890s whilst only two are regularly available from nurseries today. It is always highly desirable to have a large range of plants, and hence a large genetic pool from which new varieties and cultivars can be developed. The nurserymen of today have a restricted range of fairly hardy plants suitable for mass production. Australia's first catalogues demonstrate the richness of plant material available to the nineteenth century gardener and can also aid current nurseries that have an interest in seeking out old varieties and developing them.

Lastly, the catalogues provide a good source of information for the history of Australian horticulture. New hybrids were developed by the first Australian nurseries. For example, William MacArthur developed two new *Camellia japonica* namely Cassandra in 1850 and Mariana in 1874. An *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entry mentioned that the nurseryman George Brunning<sup>2</sup> had developed Lambert's cypress, a favourite hedge plant in the latter half of the nineteenth century in Melbourne. Peter Lumley indicated that in fact Brunning had hybridized a form of it.

Nurserymen also improved the hardiness of plants. For example, Thomas Shepherd of New South Wales, perhaps the first professional nurserymen in that this was his major business interest, after losing most of his fruit trees through blight, used a loquat root stock which proved to be successful. This information comes from his lectures. No catalogues have been located for Thomas Shepherd (Senior). Later, Thomas Lang in Ballarat was to graft his apple trees on to Northern Spy, thus also counteracting a new outbreak of blight.

The history of Australian horticulture is further elucidated by the catalogues since nurserymen often listed their latest imports in them. It is clear that nurserymen were regularly importing new plants to enhance their nursery stock. Law and Sumner published a few books on the introduction of the Osage orange from California for use as a hedge plant. The "Hedge Plant" section, catering for farmers, was quite significant in the earlier catalogues. The Osage orange is a rather prickly plant which discourages stock from wandering unduly. It is still used as a hedge plant in Western Victoria.

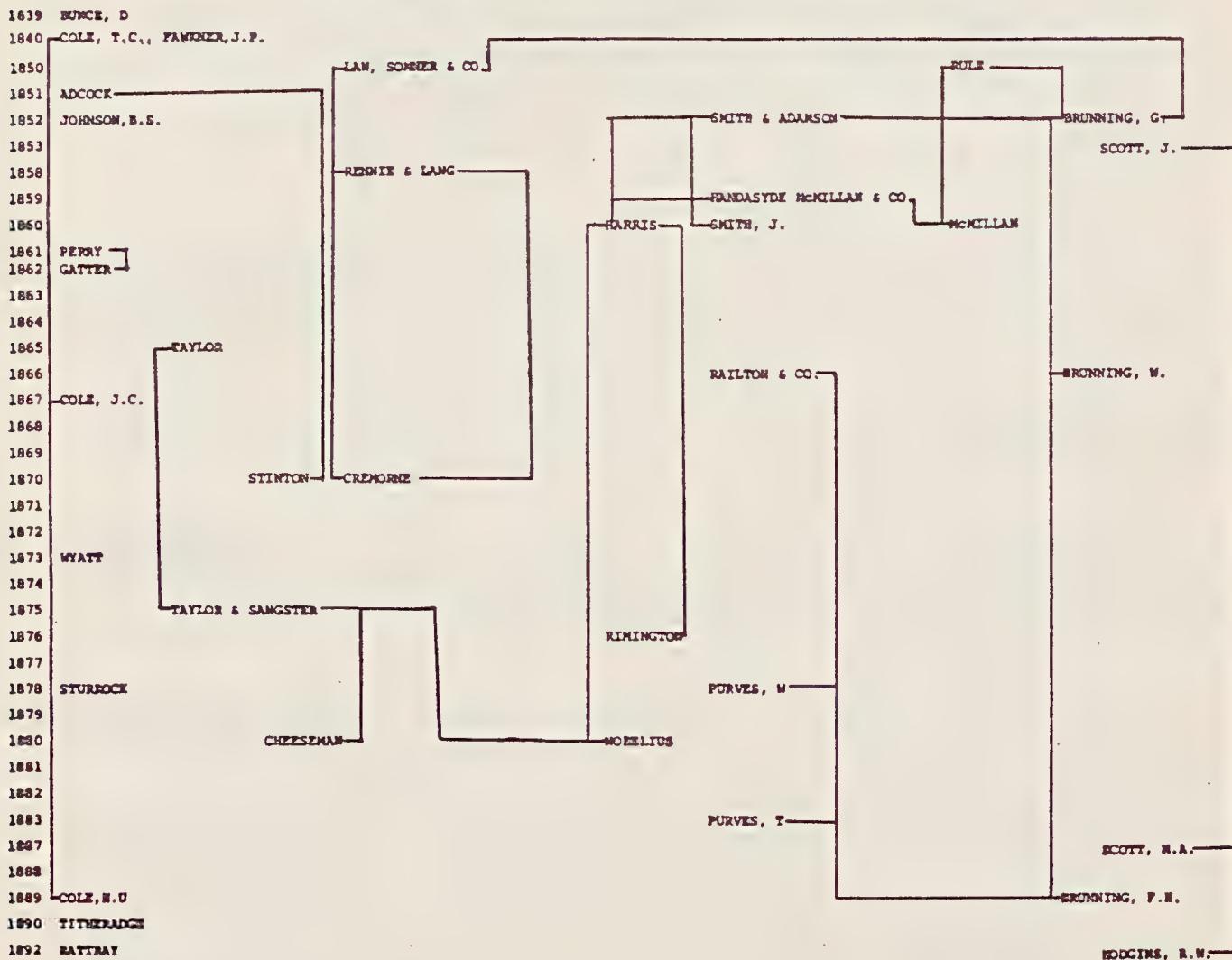
In his catalogue of 1873 George Brunning proudly claims to have introduced the true lemon thyme to Australia. He claimed that it was a particularly difficult plant to import because lemon thyme could not be raised from seed. His specimen had been brought out in the cabin of a friend; treasured and cossetted all the way to Australia.

I started seeking catalogues in my state of residence, Victoria, by examining the holdings of the National Herbarium and the State Library of Victoria. At the Herbarium the catalogues had recently been placed in the library after being collected from the working sheds around the Gardens and some had been donated by a former director, A.W. Jessep. It was more difficult to gain access to the collection at the State Library. Unfortunately, materials catalogued in the nineteenth and early twentieth century had few or no subject headings assigned to them. Thus, in order to find a particular nurseryman's catalogue, one could only check the library catalogue under his name or the name of the nursery. If one did not know the names of the relevant nurserymen no progress could be made.

Fortunately, most major Australian libraries hold a copy of the Mitchell Library's *Dictionary Catalogue of Printed Books*. Whilst this work excludes special collection material, a large number of pamphlets, maps, pictures and portraits, it does contain references to a large number of nurseries and nurserymen - both under subject and author. In addition to this, a

2. R.F. Erickson, 'George Brunning (1830-1893)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Melbourne, 1969, vol. 3, p.279.

feature of the work is that in the pre-war era, before the information explosion and when librarianship was a more leisurely profession, it was feasible for a small number of Australian journals to be partially indexed. Although it was done on an *ad hoc* basis with no apparent rationale or consistency, it is a useful idiosyncracy for historians and garden historians to know about when searching for information. In this case a few key articles from the *Victorian Historical Magazine* had been indexed. For instance, an article by E.E. Pescott,<sup>3</sup> 'The pioneers of horticulture in Victoria', although marred by inconsistencies and inaccuracies, listed a large number of nineteenth-century nurserymen.



Now it was possible to check the Mitchell Library and the State Library of Victoria more accurately. Unfortunately, Pescott's sources of reference were not named, making it difficult to check the accuracy of all the article. His notebook, housed at the State Library of Victoria, contains only a few references. It is likely that most of his information was obtained by talking to old timers and hence perhaps the muddled dates and facts can be explained.

Further catalogues were brought to light by examining volume by volume the various pamphlet collections at the State Library of Victoria. Numerous letters were written to overseas and interstate libraries, with little success. I was able to visit the most comprehensive overseas collection, that of the National Agricultural Library at Beltsville, Maryland, USA. Their collection of Australian catalogues dates from 1866 through to the present day. Surprisingly, very few Australian catalogues were held in Britain - only half a dozen. Professor Chambers of Melbourne University suggested that maybe they were pulped during the war because of paper shortages.

As yet, few catalogues have been located in private collections. Unfortunately, after plants had been ordered and received, plant catalogues were usually discarded.

Over 160 catalogues were located - 97 from Victoria  
62 from New South Wales  
2 from Tasmania.

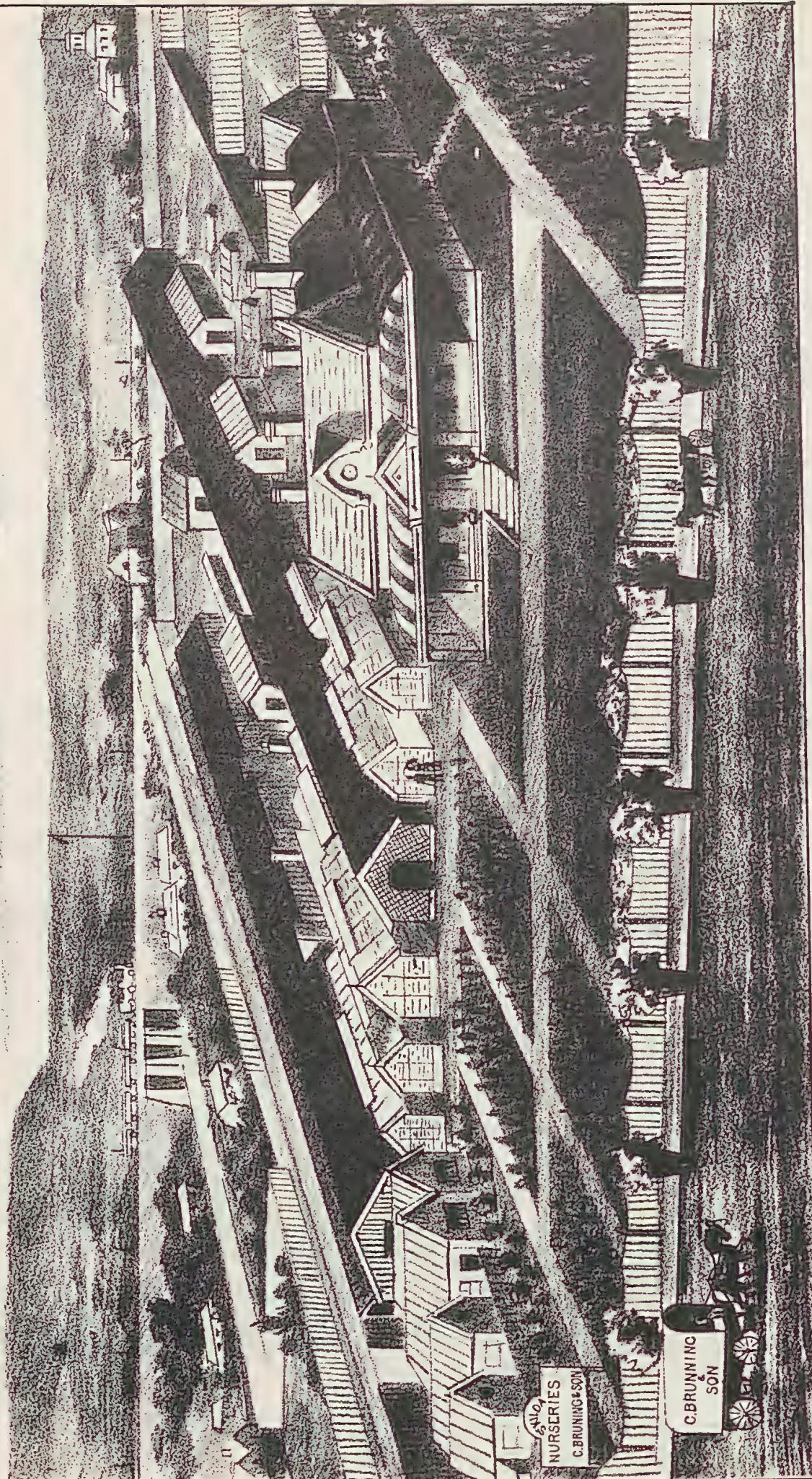
In Victoria most of the catalogues were dated from 1860-1880, whilst in New South Wales, most of the surviving catalogues were published in the 1890's.

The earliest existing catalogues is that of Dickinson (1845) of Hobart. This was published a little over 40 years after the establishment of the colony of Van Dieman's Land. This compares well with America where Princes' 1771 catalogue was the earliest one known to be published. His nursery was established in 1730, some 150 years after British settlement. The first British catalogues published as a separate entity was compiled by Lucas in 1677. Lack of suitably advanced and cheap printing and paper technology prevented the wide use of catalogues until the nineteenth century.

Once the actual catalogues were sighted, accurate information could be obtained from them - i.e. dates, addresses, histories of each firm, horticultural methods, stock quantities, cultivars raised etc.

One assumes that the information given in the catalogues is accurate. The only query I have sighted, concerns a nurseryman for whom publications (including one of the oldest Australian gardening books) have been found, but no nursery catalogues, namely Daniel Bunce. Formerly of the Denmark Hill Nursery in Hobart, he established his St.Kilda business and then published a list of indigenous plants of Victoria, *Hortus Victoriensis*. Whilst now being regarded as a rare collector's item, the publication was regarded with some suspicion by one of Tasmania's leading botanists, Ronald Gunn. In a letter to Baron von Mueller he wrote, 'Bunce....was celebrated for giving any hard name to any unknown plant in his nursery'<sup>4</sup> and that the work was mainly compiled from a list of Tasmanian plants written by James Backhouse and published in the Hobart Town Almanac for 1835.

4. Edward E. Pescott, 'The writings of Daniel Bunce, 1813-1872', in Victorian Historical Magazine, 23(3): 118, 1950.



Brunning & Son St Kilda Nurseries, Melbourne  
from The Jubilee History of Tasmania

It was the practice in the British situation to list plants not in stock or at least some nurserymen claimed virtuously not to indulge in this practice. I have found no reference to this practice in Australia.

In general, although one nurseryman admitted lowering his prices in response to fierce competition in the 1880s, there seems to have been a fairly co-operative relationship between nurserymen. This worked in a positive manner in the case of the outstanding consortium of Harris, Brunning, Rimington, Cheeseman and Nobelius who were to control much of the nursery trade in Melbourne by the late nineteenth century and were largely responsible for its successful combination of aggressive business drive, massive exports, strict quality control and restless inventiveness.<sup>5</sup> In the Victorian situation, a cob-web like tree can be built up, showing the intricate business relationships of nurserymen there.

Additional evidence of these relationships is demonstrated by an old Macarthur catalogue c.1857 that I recently sighted at R. Cheeseman & Sons, Brighton, Victoria. Prices, almost certainly for the trade only, had been written by hand. The catalogue had obviously been handed from nurseryman to nurseryman over the years. The names of the Victorian nurserymen Smith and Adamson, Joseph Harris and Richard Cheeseman were written on the cover. Its well-thumbed appearance bears testimony to extensive use over several decades at least.

Nursery catalogues are of course not the only vehicles for monitoring Australian horticultural history. Early Australian paintings and drawings, biographies, Australian literature, government publications - especially those of Agriculture Departments and botanic gardens, Royal Society publications, also those of horticultural and historical societies, business records and inventories, private papers, letters, newspapers, business directories and almanacs and particularly the papers of Joseph Banks, the Macarthurs and the Macleays, all help to provide an accurate picture of the introduction of plants to Australia. Indeed, to gauge plant introduction before 1845 these alternative sources must be used.

I am currently examining Queensland nineteenth century plant nursery catalogues and would be most interested to receive any information about them or the nurserymen who compiled them.

5. R.F. Erickson, 'Carl Axel Nobelius (1851-1921)', in Australian Dictionary of Biography. Melbourne, 1974, vol. 5, p. 344.

The above extract is from the 1899 catalogue of the Melbourne firm of James Scott & Sons.

## Eryldene

ITS PAST, ITS PRESENT, ITS FUTURE

Mary Davis.

'Eryldene is perhaps the most important Colonial Revival garden to survive in Sydney, and I cannot believe that this garden - although it is very important that it be preserved by a trust - will ever be quite the same without the guiding hand of Professor Waterhouse'.

- Howard Tanner.

I was in Kyoto delivering a lecture about Eryldene to the International Camellia Society Conference, a society which Professor Waterhouse founded, when that was said, but had I been present, I would certainly have wished to comment and I am glad of the opportunity to do so now.

There is no doubt in my mind that Professor Waterhouse influenced a great many of his friends and visitors while sharing with them the beauty that it was his pleasure to create over sixty-three years of occupancy.

When he died in August, 1977, at the age of 96, a meeting of his close Camellia Society friends and family was held for the purpose of assisting the family to care for the garden until its purchase by the National Trust was completed. That this did not happen and that The Eryldene Trust was set up and ultimately purchased the property from the family on 10th August, last year is now part of Eryldene's history.

Early in September, 1977, I voluntarily prepared an "order of priorities" document covering the maintenance of the garden. I found myself implementing those priorities when, in November that year, the gardener departed.

During the last decade of his long life, the Professor was no longer physically able to care for his garden, except for perhaps watering, nor could he employ the kind of trained help his garden needed because it had become a labour-intensive, specialised garden with camellias as the dominant species.

To restore and maintain Eryldene is both a privilege and a challenge to my professional training for whatever I do, it must look as though it was done by Professor Waterhouse. The first step was to research the man's philosophy about his garden which, fortunately, has been documented and recorded. Much information has been gleaned from close friends such as Paul Jones, the artist whose work Professor Waterhouse encouraged. I was given a copy of a magazine article entitled "Gardening as an Interpretative Art" which had been written by Professor Waterhouse in February 1926. He was then 45. Fifty years later in a television interview, his basic ideas had not changed, only his personal tastes. He said, "the true artist gardener likes to create something which is expressive in the same form as you get in the music of a symphony". How can we keep the charisma of Eban Gowrie Waterhouse at Eryldene? Only by analysing his tastes and heeding his message.

He was a fortunate man in that his longevity allowed him two careers: one as a Professor of languages and one in camellias. It was the second which brought him world fame, and it also greatly changed the face of his garden. There are nearly 700 camellias in seven-eighths

of an acre and that is certainly too many. It is partly why there are so many in tubs.

To quote from his 1926 writings: "Tubs should be used symmetrically in two's or three's and set in relation to the more solid and vacant masses of the building. However, unless carefully handled, they may easily become ponderous."

"Their formality and reticence should be broken by planting them with alyssum, annual phlox, lobelia and nasturtium, allowing these plants to spill over the sides of the white-washed tubs and even grow in the crevices of the flagging beneath.

"A tub always challenges attention, and is a futile feature unless properly treated. But rightly understood they greatly enhance the immediate approach to the house."

How I wish he had heeded his words of 1926, for today, with so many plants in tubs, the labour costs of re-tubbing are a real problem. It takes three men to handle and re-tub a camellia residing in a 1 M diameter concrete tub.

There is no question that the peace, beauty and charm of his garden impresses visitors from far and wide, but Eryldene also attracts some criticism, because public taste is often based on garden competition standards.

Compared to today, the horticultural standard of Eryldene in the 1940s was much higher. Professor Waterhouse was then just into his fifties and he had not collected or acquired so many camellia cultivars.

He once said he wished oxalis could be declared a national emblem and then he would really have been in fashion. One of my first decisions was to spread 1 M pieces of lapped black plastic, hidden with mulch, to prevent photosynthesis in the oxalis leaves.

I am only able to be at Eryldene 16 hours per week and a garden of that nature certainly needs more time spent on it. A small band of voluntary helpers assists with pruning and propagation and one lady gives a half day each week to help with general tasks.

Until a recent grant was received from the Heritage Council of NSW, a voluntary roster of dedicated people hand-watered the garden for nearly three years. Now, with the installation of a manually operated irrigation system, I am able to control watering while attending to other chores.

Professor Waterhouse's collection is probably the most valuable in Australia, being composed of those cultivars associated with the history of early Australian nurserymen, secondly, camellias which he raised and named (including the Waterhouse hybrids), thirdly, those given to him by his international friends.

Eight of the twelve governors at present on the board, are members and officers of the Australian and International Camellia Societies. Their expertise and guidance is invaluable. They are people whose professional careers ensure a business-like approach to the problems of setting up and running a trust.

Small adjustments have to be made to the garden to allow for public useage as it changes from being a private domestic garden to one open to the public once a month during the camellia season and beyond.

The adjustments include the provision of two public lavatories and a new set of steps from the lawn tennis court at the western end to allow easier access for those carrying equipment up from the street. The path in mediation corner has this week been slightly changed to keep the public from accidentally knocking the delightful chinese roof tiles which Professor Waterhouse bought in London in the early 1930s.

The nursery area has to be closed off on public open days as last year some small plants were stolen. Containerised plants do have to be re-tubbed and moved about as they outgrow their allotted space.

"For a garden to have character and charm it must offer the beholder an harmonious combination of forms, textures and colour. A garden is both an expression of Nature and a statement of man's mind in reaction to the beauty that surrounds him. It can thus become much more than a place where flowers are grown."

The palette of plant material used at Eryldene is restricted, the accents restricted, ornamentation restricted, but oh so tastefully executed. His dearest wish was that his house and garden be preserved for future generations. With properly recorded guidelines, wise management and the support of people who care, it is possible for the spirit of this great Australian to live on in the garden he created.





Professor Waterhouse wrote the following article for the magazine, *Home*, and it was published on 1st February, 1926. After reading the article by Mary Davis, we thought it would be interesting for members to see what kind of advice Professor Waterhouse gave about planting and gardens.

#### GARDENING AS AN INTERPRETATIVE ART

By Professor E.G. Waterhouse

For a garden to have character and charm, it must offer the beholder an harmonious combination of forms, features and colours. Nature and cultivation will ensure the growth of plants and flowers of which the mind of man may provide a deeper interpretation by a deliberate process of selection and grouping. A garden is both an expression of Nature and a statement of man's mind in reaction to the beauty that surrounds him. It can thus become much more than a place where flowers are grown.

In this sense gardening is one of the interpretative arts. The true gardener sees that certain forms and colours present a beautiful and satisfying statement and he sets to work to give this statement full expression and to eliminate all clashes and jars. He is not satisfied with a nondescript garden with a mere selection of plants, but ever seeks, by observation and experiment, to penetrate to a fuller understanding of the marvel and the charm of natural beauty.

For all that we hold precious we rightly endeavour to provide a setting. The garden exists for the home and is rightly set out and planned in relation to the house.

And it is rarely fully expressive unless fittingly enclosed. How little as yet, do we realise the very great beauty of appropriate hedge treatment as giving dignity and personality to our homes and gardens! The surrounding hedges are the beautifully textured walls which enclose that most delightful of open-air rooms which is our garden. Simple hedges of common olive, of small-leaved privet or of laurel are invariably satisfying. They have density and interest of texture, which is so important where there is a repetition throughout a certain distance of the same leaf forms. But such hedges should be allowed to attain a certain height and should never be subordinated to the fence, which is, at best, a necessary evil. Those who would share their garden with the public may still do so by cutting a loophole in their hedge at particular points of vantage.

A suitable line of trees, spaced at intervals and grown on the inner line behind the hedge and in conjunction with it, will prove a source of unrivalled delight. For rhythmic form, sprightly grace and rapidity of growth, the Lombardy poplar can hardly be excelled. And for more lateral spreading aspects of leafage the Cape mulberry deserves a very high place. And if there is still room for flowering shrubs behind hedge and tree-row, nothing is more showy and more hardy than the double rose oleander.

Such being the pleasant range of possibility - simple hedge - hedge and tree-row - hedge, tree-row and flowering shrub, we may turn from the leafy textured walls of our open-air room to our treatment of its floor, which is now regularly defined. We peg out direct unobtrusive paths, lay out our future flower beds, and provide open spaces of lawn for the repose of the eye and for the gambols of our children, or for our own delight when we disport ourselves in the garden. And the thing of next importance for us to do is not the planting of flowering annuals, but the disposition of the shrub furniture in this our open-air room. Some use of more or less formal shrubbery is of immense importance in pulling garden and house together and fusing them into a unity. It is just here that so many gardens fail. A shrubless garden is vacant and devoid of personality once the flowering season is over.

The function of shrubs in a garden is more precisely that of the more important pieces of furniture in a room. And the same pains should be bestowed on their selection and their placing. Generally speaking they should be planted in relation to the masses or accentual features of the house, thus forming a pleasing transition from the abstraction of the architecture to the greater wilderness or formlessness of the garden as a whole, and as we intend the shrubs as permanent features, we select them for their shape and texture, as well as for their flowers. Nothing is more satisfying in pyramidal form than the camellia or the juniper.

For roundness of shape, interest... perfume and fruitage, the thorny mandarin has no rival. It at once gives distinct character to the flower garden. The hydrangea, too, has beautiful natural form, and makes a fine symmetrical feature on either side of steps or door in a southern or eastern aspect. We may treat the French lavender, the heliotrope as semi-formal shrubs of lesser height.

They are best planted in the garden approaches to the house on account of the welcome of their perfume.

A garden with shrubs well disposed is always a place of good cheer, even at times when there are no flowers. And how much more effective the flowers themselves become in an enclosed garden when massed in the wider spaces between shrub and shrub, and building up with them and the house into one unified expression!

Massing of flowers and rigorous control of colour and the use of foils will produce most joyous effects in a garden. The use of white flowers in sufficient quantity to set off the other colours is all-important. It is here that the alyssum and the candytuft play such a role. I know a pink perennial phlox that is lovely in colour, and becomes absolutely precious when liberally attended on both sides by phlox of a pearly white.

Until colour can be controlled, not too many notes should be attempted at once. Great satisfaction will be felt at the repetition, after an interval, and with slight variation, of a few happy effects. After all, a garden is a symphony in form and colour, and there must be recurrence of its main motifs.

The long border, flanked by a wall, offers wonderful opportunities for the gardener's art. It should always be considered from the point of view of its three levels - high back, medium central and low front. The high back level is of great importance as a foil for the rest. Here may be grown hollyhocks or, if a permanent feature be preferred, heliotrope may be trained up on wire netting and allowed to cascade from the top. Little variety should be attempted on this back line. Medium-central (or a little to the back of that line) is the position for penstemons, perennial phlox, antirrhinums, larkspurs, delphiniums and Canterbury bells. The invaluable Columbine can venture a little farther forward and should be grown in clumps of four or five. On the low-front level, gay verbenas, phlox drummondi and viscaria will sing aloud for joy when massed liberally between white alyssum. A similar setting is suitable for Virginia stock and primula in the early spring garden.

Leaf texture should not be neglected in the flower border. Most important in this connection is the common flag iris, which has loveliness of form and colour and binds the lower with the medium levels of the garden by its vigorous upward thrust. Adorable, too, for its flower and peerless perfume, the iris is most effectively placed in clumps at about one third of the distance from either end of the garden rather forward of the mid-central line. To add further atmosphere to our border a group of two or three red annual flax (*linum*) should be grown just behind the alyssum and about four feet away from each clump of iris. The flax is both charmingly decorative in itself and acts as a transparent veil through which the more distant colours of the other flowers are seen on the approach.

The border just described, backed by its wall and repeated with slight variants in the same general colour scheme on the other side of a flagged path, is capable of bringing paradise very near to this earth.

There are parts of the garden where tub or vase treatment is in place, especially in a flagged courtyard or in conjunction with a door or garden seat. The tub is essentially a furnishing feature. It is formal to begin with, and should contain only shrubs that are shapely. The thorny mandarin is the prince of tub plants, but the cumquat, the oleander, lavender, heliotrope and red China rose, also form a very goodly company, and all combine effectively with the mandarin. Tubs should be used symmetrically in two's or three's, and set in relation to the building. However unless carefully handled, they may easily become ponderous. Their formality and reticence should be broken by planting them with alyssum, annual phlox, lobelia and nasturtium, allowing these plants to spill over the side of the whitewashed tub and even grow in the crevices of the flagging beneath. A tub always challenges attention and is a futile feature unless properly treated. But rightly understood they greatly enhance the immediate approach to the house, whether from the front or the back.

Tubs may be used where no other gardening is possible. Here is a feature that might be used with great effect in the roof garden restaurants of our larger city houses.



That tubs pleased Hardy Wilson, Eryldene's co-designer, is shown in his use of them in many of his drawings.

### Symmons Plains Sundial

Garden Cuttings has recently celebrated its first birthday. Our congratulations to Tim and Keva North who have managed to provide a consistently entertaining, historical and practical newsletter. Tim North has also bravely taken on the task of A.G.H.S. secretary and provided the photograph below taken during the Tasmanian Conference early this year.



Sundial at Symmons Plains.

The inscription reads:

Time is too slow  
For those who fear  
Too long for those who grieve  
Too short for those who rejoice but  
For those who love  
Time is eternity.

More of Tim North's photographs will be published in the next *Journal*.

## Beechworth Cemetery-

### a landscape study

This report, to be published in three parts because of its length, was prepared for the Beechworth Cemetery Trust by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, Department of Crown Lands and Survey, in 1981, by R.D. Spencer, J. Dyke and W. Worboys.

This valuable and interesting document is in five sections. An introduction, in which a brief history is given of the origin, design and development of cemeteries, also contains an account of Cemeteries in Victoria, cemetery and funeral plants, and an explanation of the historical development of Beechworth Public Gardens and Cemetery. Section 2 discusses the basic structure of the cemetery and its native and exotic flora. In Section 3, the authors deal with maintenance, planting and specific area development.

The report also contains the authors' conclusions, a valuable bibliography and appendices with lists of plants, equipment and chemicals and general maintenance techniques.

The authors state in their foreword:

"This report was undertaken by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, primarily to record, analyse and make recommendations on the horticultural management of Beechworth Cemetery."

"It soon became apparent, however, that in both design and horticultural content, cemeteries have powerful historical traditions which must be taken fully into account when formulating recommendations for any future development."

"With this in mind, we have included a fairly extensive introduction which we hope will illustrate the value of Beechworth Cemetery within a wider, historical context."

We are grateful to Mr. Peter Lumley for bringing this report to our attention and to the Beechworth Cemetery Trustees and the Royal Botanic Gardens for permission to reprint it.

## BEECHWORTH CEMETERY

### A Landscape Study: Part I

#### I. INTRODUCTION

##### I.I A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ORIGIN, DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF CEMETERIES

Whether or not our dead be cremated or embalmed, the tradition of burial or entombment appears to be universal as a token of respect for the departed. The burial sites have varied in elaboration from the simple barrow (or tumulus) and cairn of the celts and found throughout Europe, to the vast monuments, mausoleums and pyramids of the ancients.

The burial grounds of the early Greeks, Romans and ancients (and those in the Jewish tradition) were all outside the precincts of the

large cities. In christian countries this custom has followed a different path.

In 752AD, in Britain, St.Cuthbert was granted papal permission to add churchyards to the churches or monasteries so that the various orders of religiosi might bury their dead near the living, the higher ranking members of the community being buried within the buildings. Before consecration was a regular procedure the graveyard or churchyard was hardly an exclusive place; pagan, christian, saint and sinner were buried together facing east (a remnant of the iron age when corpses were interred with their feet facing east, facing the first glimmer of light each day) but with little or no spatial distinction. However, by the 14th century the churchyard had become more discriminating. Suicides and lunatics were rarely buried in hallowed ground, and it was not until an act of parliament in 1823 that Englishmen could bury murderers in churchyards and then only between the hours of 9.00 p.m. and midnight. Lesser sinners, suicides and stillborns could be buried in the northern area in a north-south alignment and with reversed headstones. Priests were buried facing west so that they might watch over their congregations in death as they had in life. Well into the modern era, churchyards remained precise indicators of social position and public righteousness.

The graveyard of the late middle ages was a symbol of paradise with plants having a symbolic meaning. Rosemary was potent as a garland and evergreens and beeches warded off evil spirits in the winter. Similarly, roses and willows had traditional links and it is interesting to note that the weeping willow was first planted to drain low-lying ground. The churchyard was most highly developed during this period. It was a total environment, simultaneously in and beyond the everyday world, where every element of design from plants to monuments and the orientation of the graves had traditional meaning. In fact all sorts of activities took place there such as fairs, markets, ball games and even courts of law.

However, the puritan assault on superstition and vestigial catholicism fragmented the old perception of the graveyard as a sacred place and it became an unimportant almost wild place, the responsibility of no-one. It was often used as pasture for livestock and the trees for timber, but it remained the customary burial site until the early 19th century.

In the crowded towns of industrial Europe the churchyards eventually became offensive and unhealthy. In England this system was attacked by sanitary reformers in the 1840's, most notably Chadwick. An Act of Parliament in 1855 (later to be known as the Burial Act) finally closed the churchyards and led to the development of the extramural cemetery, which has continued to the present day. No doubt a further strong influence on this development was exerted by J.C. Loudon, the great horticultural chronicler of the early 19th century - in his treatise on cemetery management and design.

The word cemetery derives from the Latin equivalent of 'dormitory' and refers to sleep, and was no doubt intended to soften some of the many unpleasant associations of the graveyard. It is thought that the fine burial grounds of the Turks may have suggested the idea of the cemetery to the Europeans - these burial grounds were considered the most picturesque in the world. Around Constantinople they formed vast tracts

of cypress and other trees, forming exhilarating forests. It is interesting that Mr. Billson, the Mayor of Beechworth referred to the Turkish influence and to the 'recent' change from church graveyards to the extramural cemetery in his opening speech at the installation of the 'Turkish' fountain in 1900.

Below is a description of a Turkish cemetery written in 1880 and proclaiming its attractions.

"In Turkey the Cemeteries are favourite promenades, and 'Meditations among the Tombs' amuse all ranks and ages. The most beautiful, undoubtedly, are those at Pera.

The larger Cemetery is an immense plateau, overshadowed by pines and sycamores. The crowd seat themselves without hesitation on the long tombstones which cover the resting places of Frenchmen and Englishmen. A cafe, modelled after the kiosk, rises in a clearing which opens up a view of the sea. Noisy laughter echoes under the funereal trees. The shore of Asia is distinctly visible, with its painted houses and mosques, as if one were looking across the Thames at Greenwich or the Rhine at Coblenz. In the distance the horizon is terminated by the truncated summit of the Bithynian Olympus, crowned with a diadem of clouds. On the shore, to the left, the Summer Palace of the Sultans extends its gilded Greek colonnades."

One of the oldest established, celebrated and influential cemeteries of Europe was that of Père-la-Chaise near Paris. It had previously been a large garden and was laid out as a cemetery in 1804, and thought to be the prototype of cemeteries of Western Europe, its arrangement being followed by cemeteries in London and other English cities.

In 1878, William Robinson the well-known Irish landscape gardener, toured the parks and gardens of Paris and was dismayed to see that the great Parisian cemeteries of supposed Turkish influence were overcrowded, cluttered with monuments and not in the least picturesque. He believed that the Americans introduced the true 'Garden Cemetery'.

"For beauty, extent, careful planting, picturesque views and keeping the garden-cemeteries formed within the past generation or so near all the principal American cities are a great advance upon anything of the kind in Europe."

The early colonial concept of burial in America offered no radical alternatives to the puritanical burial ground in England. There is no evidence to suggest a pre-conceived plan; graves were in rows and there were no family plots. Floral decorations were rare and ornamental planting was unheard of. The graveyard was centred in the village or town, unscreened and a constant reminder that it was a group monument.

In 1796 the first sign of another and newer concept of the graveyard appeared, when the New Burying Ground was established at New Haven. It was unique in that it was carefully planned and divided into squares (a family occupying half a square). These squares were surrounded by Lombardy poplars and occasionally Weeping Willows were planted in the centres of the squares. The overall appearance would have been formal, neat and tidy. The New Haven Burying Ground was also located away from the town centre. This pattern or symmetry was essentially inspired by two factors: the

enthusiasm for the grid street pattern that was affecting America and the need to subdivide into regular lots for the New Burying Ground was a private money-making corporation. This did not happen in England until 25 years later and is not a feature in Australian cemeteries. This layout devised by Hillhouse, became the standard for most American cemeteries.

However, soon to develop was a cemetery of a completely different nature and this may well have influenced cemetery design in Australia.

Mt. Auburn cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts near Boston, is well known as the first large-scale example of Romantic landscape design in America. It started out as a botanical garden but in 1831, 50 acres were given over for the purposes of a cemetery. The plan took full advantage of the picturesque location and varied terrain. Informal curved paths and artificial water were created and a substantial number of trees and shrubberies were planted. What Mt. Auburn signifies is that it was the setting and not the graves that inspired the emotion. Mt. Auburn eventually influenced the standard cemetery introduced by Hillhouse by softening the rectangular layouts with informal planting of trees and a more 'rustic quality'.

The emphasis was on quietness and the beauty of nature with minimal distracting stonework and artificial objects, and no enclosures. They become known as 'Park Cemeteries' or 'Rural Cemeteries'. Spring Grove in Cincinnati, Ohio is generally recognised as one of the pioneers of park-like cemeteries and perhaps the best example in the world. Shrubs and trees are planted about in irregular fashion upon a lawn and the lots are clustered together in groups. The overall effect is not unlike that of a Romantic landscape garden such as the Melbourne Royal Botanic Gardens.

Perhaps the latest phase in the metamorphosis of the graveyard into an environment is the so-called memorial park or 'memory garden'. Their most outstanding feature is the total elimination of headstones or monuments (reduced to a small plaque and a container sunk below the level of the turf or included in memorial walls) and an overwhelming expanse of grass lawn. This coupled with the ever increasing popularity of cremation as a form of disposing of the dead, seems to be increasing in popularity in Australia as well as America.

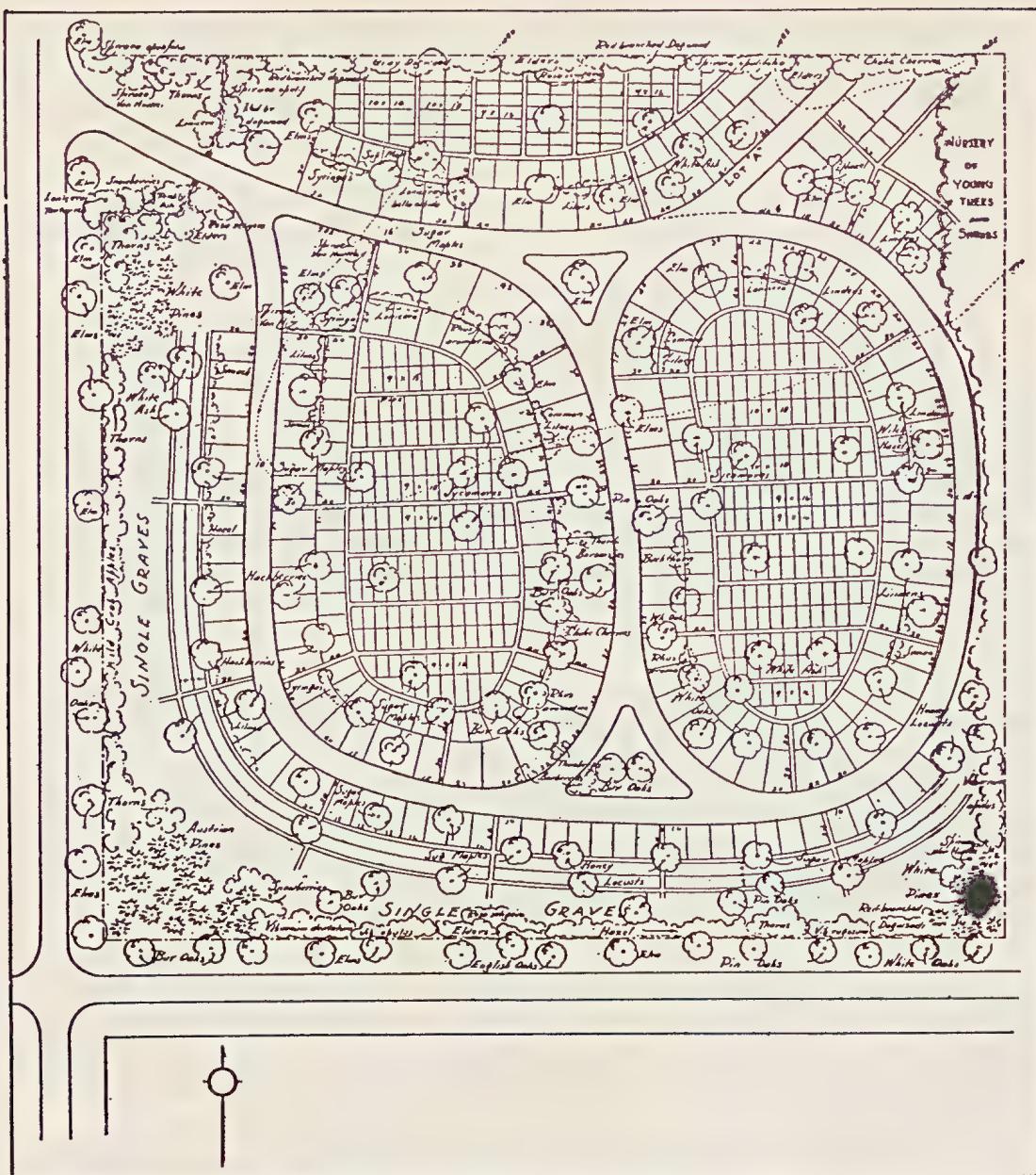


Fig. I. This illustration from "The Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture" by L.H. Bailey, 1935, shows a typical ground-plan for an American landscape cemetery.



Fig. 2. The Cemetery at Père-la-Chaise near Paris, laid out in 1804. This illustration is taken from "The Parks, Promenades and Gardens of Paris" by W. Robinson, 1869.

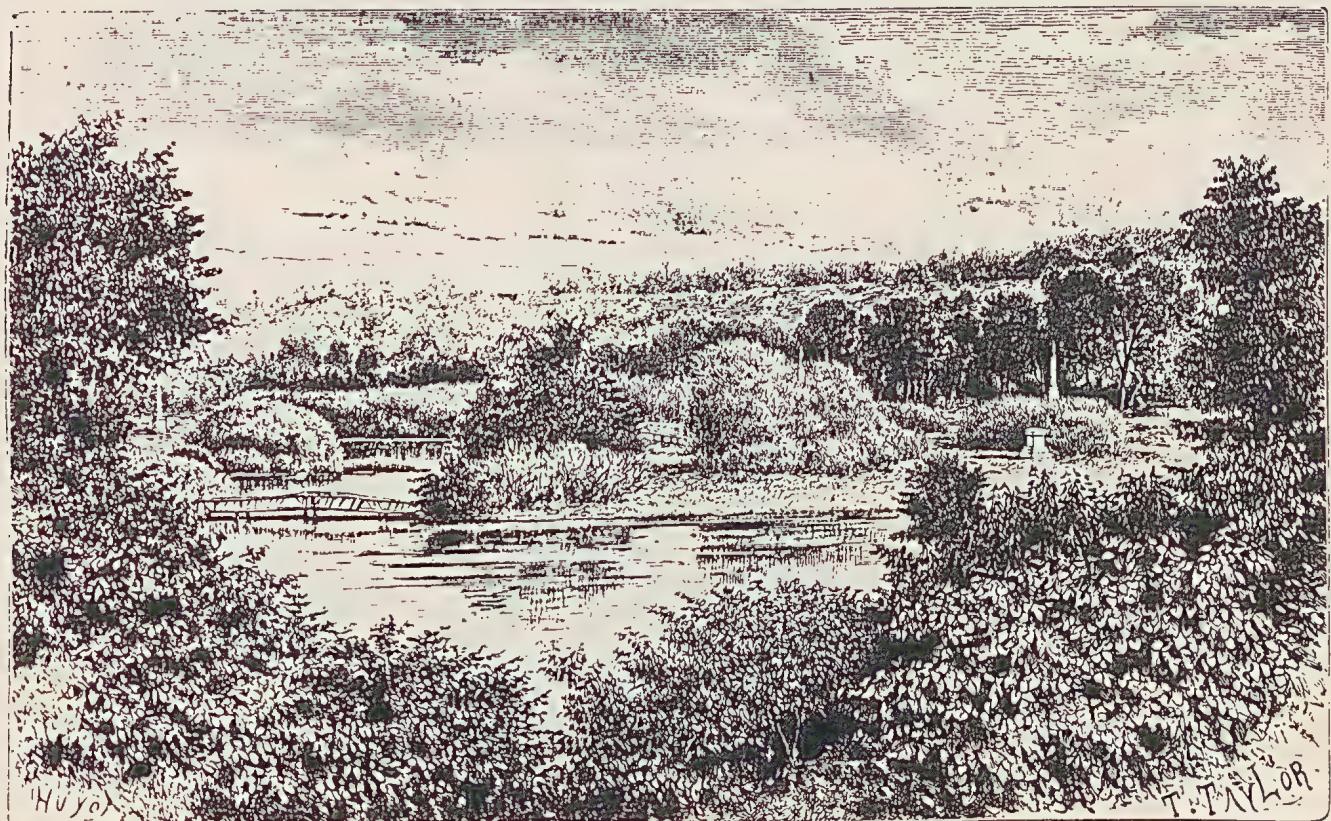


Fig. 3. This illustration from "The Parks and Gardens of Paris" by W. Robinson 1878, shows a view in an American 19th century garden cemetery.

## I.2 CEMETERIES IN VICTORIA

When Lieutenant-Governor Collins moved from Port Phillip in 1804, he left behind buried in the sand at Sullivan Bay, the bodies of no fewer than 21 members of his party. No permanent enclosure appears to have been made and during the following years the graves were lost to sight. This 'European' burial ground was to be the first of many in Victoria.

Soon after settlement began at Melbourne, six acres were marked off on Flagstaff Hill as a burial ground. The year was 1838. These were left undisturbed when the Flagstaff Gardens were formed on the Hill in the same year Sir Richard Bourke selected a site for a cemetery, now the 'Old Melbourne Cemetery'. This cemetery was partitioned into sections of different religious denominations - a trend that was to follow throughout Victoria and is evident at Beechworth. It is interesting to note that this formation of denominational allotments took on the following ratios: Church of England, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic each had two acres; Wesleyans, Methodists, Quakers and Jews, each one acre; half an acre was reserved for aborigines. Convicts are believed to have been buried at the north end in "No Mans' Land". The total area of the "Old Melbourne Cemetery" was 11 acres. By 1850 all sites at this cemetery were taken up and an area of 100 acres at Carlton was surveyed for a new Melbourne general cemetery.

The development of the cemetery in Victoria has several themes and these have been noted in a study, "Cemeteries of Victoria - A National Estate Study", undertaken by L.P. Planning for the Ministry for Planning in 1977. They recognised nine land settlement themes and used these as a basis for classification. The themes include aborigines, convicts, pastoralists, goldseekers, small farmers, seafarers, famous people, losers, (bushrangers) and Melbournians. They were able to establish four classes by using a 'sieving' procedure based on history, location and scenic quality. Beechworth was classified as an 'A' class cemetery, specifically for its association with the gold-rush and the significant presence of Chinese graves.

What influences have there been upon cemetery design in Victoria? Traditional European influences are found in the larger cemeteries, particularly in Melbourne. Features include formal avenue planting; *Cupressus sempervirens* at Kew and Box Hill, *Pinus canariensis* at Echuca and serpentine pathways such as at Melbourne general cemetery. Formal ornate gateways are also a feature - a fine example being found at Beechworth. In general, however, a strong characteristic of most provincial cemeteries is their location, usually within native bushland. The cemetery at Stieglitz, associated with goldmining, is set in a clearing within eucalypt scrub with little internal planting. Similarly a strong landscape characteristic of Echuca cemetery is the surrounding red gum forest. Perhaps one of the strongest influences is the choice of exotic planting.

In broad terms, we believe that the early Victorian cemeteries follow, as might be expected, in the style of European cemeteries of the period. However, there are romantic influences which may have come in part, from America.

Drawing distinctions in general styles of development can rarely be done precisely. However, we present here a table of contrasting landscape characteristics which illustrates major differences in cemetery design approach.

The 'romantic' component of American cemeteries was no doubt influenced by the English romantic garden style. We refer to the kind of cemeteries to be found in the large European cities of the mid to late 1800s by the loose term 'European'.

<u>ROMANTIC (AMERICAN)</u>	<u>EUROPEAN</u>
Curved Paths.	Straight Paths.
Emphasis on plants.	Emphasis on monuments.
Lack of distinctive enclosure.	Marked boundaries often of tall trees.
Plantings and graves scattered irregularly.	Strong arrangement of graves into blocks or denominations and tree-planting symmetrical, often in avenues.
Trees selected for general landscape effect.	Trees mostly coniferous, with dark foliage and formal shape sometimes pendant.
Inclusion of rustic features. (e.g. lakes, bridges)	Plants often traditional and with symbolic value.

*Cupressus funebris*  
Funeral Cypress



### I.3 CEMETERY AND FUNERAL PLANTS

"For as long as the human imagination has been confronted with the mystery of death it has formed an association of ideas between death and gardens. The garden has been a poetic symbol through many centuries. Gethsemane was a garden and so was Eden."

Kenneth Lindley

No doubt part of the association referred to above was the recognition of gardens as places of rest and tranquility.

Only two or three generations ago plants were attributed with a significance beyond that of appearance or scientific interest. This is especially true of those plants found in cemeteries and church graveyards - places where we confront the great questions of mortality, immortality, transience, resurrection and the eternal.

Specific plants have been associated with death, its rituals and surroundings since antiquity, and the similarity in the kinds of plants found within cemeteries is not arbitrary but a remnant of the symbolism of folklore and mythology which has been largely forgotten or ignored.

To understand the horticultural landscape of cemeteries it is first necessary to know something of the significance of the plants that have traditionally been planted within them.

It has often been man's wish to be buried beneath a tree - and those trees chosen have generally been of striking appearance. As with early religious architecture, strong vertical lines have frequently been used for landscape effect, elevating the soul from worldly concerns and focusing 'heavenwards' on the eternal. There is thus a preference for trees of a pyramidal or 'spired' outline. Associated with this is a preference for trees with sombre, dark foliage or bark, black berries, and fruits, or melancholy blossoms. Conifers, possessing many of these properties, have always been major subjects and amongst these the Cypress has reigned supreme as the emblem of woe; it was regarded as a symbol of both life and death - its evergreen character signifying eternal life whilst it was considered that once cut it would never flourish again, indicating eternal death. From the earliest times the Cypress has been an integral component in the burial grounds of both Western and Eastern cultures. It was considered a physical symbol of the departed soul and was often planted on tombs. The funeral pyre of the ancients consisted of Cypress, Yew and Fir; the Athenians buried their heroes in coffins made from Cypress and the Egyptian mummies were in boxes hewn from the same material. Cupid's darts were thought to be made from Cypress and even Noah's ark and Christ's cross. It is certain that the Cretans used it in ship-building and it was abundant in Assyria where the Ark was supposed to have been built and from where Alexander the Great's armadas were sent. It is from these early traditions that European cemeteries gained much of their character.

Coles, an early English commentator, says of English funerals:

"Cypresse garlands are of great account at funeralls amongst the gentiler sort, but Rosemary and Bayes are used by the commons both at funeralls and weddings. They are all plants which fade not a good while after they are gathered and used (as I conceive) to intimate unto us that the remembrance of the present solemnity might not die presently (ie at once), but be kept in minde for many yeares."

More recently the narrow 'Pencil Pine', *Cupressus sempervirens* has become a standard planting for cemeteries. There is also a preference for trees that are pendant or 'weeping', signifying grief, sorrow and mourning, such as the Weeping Birch, Willow and Casuarina. The 'Tree of Life' or 'Arbor Vitae; (*Thuja*), is used for the same reasons as the Cypress and *Thuja orientalis*, the Chinese Arbor-Vitae, is known to have a resin that was used as incense at sacrifices.

The Yew has been used as a symbol of mourning since time immemorial in a tradition that flows from the Egyptians to the ancient Greeks and Romans to the Britons. It has often been regarded as the most important element of consecrated ground and was generally planted alone; it is well established in the graveyards of England, and is renowned for being poisonous. Its branches were at one time carried in procession to the grave and Plato recommended that Yew trees be planted around graves to refresh them.

The Elms and Oaks are not strictly funeral plants but have associations with the grave since coffins are often made of their wood (the ancients used Cypress and Cedar).

Bay trees are the emblem of victory - in cemeteries presumably victory over death but more specifically a symbol of the resurrection since they rapidly rejuvenate from the base after the leaves have withered away.

The Walnut is considered a funeral tree in some countries - its shadow is also rumoured to bring death.

Many flowers and shrubs have special significance and most notable amongst these is Rosemary, the emblem of faithful remembrance. Sprigs of Rosemary were often carried in funeral procession (as well as Ivy, Laurel and other evergreens as a symbol of the soul's immortality) and tossed into the grave after the body. There are many literary references to the 'language' of plants, most notably in The Bible and Shakespeare - Ophelia says:

"There's Rosemary for you, that's for remembrance;  
pray you, love, remember."

And Friar Lawrence:

"Dry up your tears, and stick your Rosemary on this fair corpse;"

Ivy, being an evergreen and a symbol of friendship is frequently allowed to ramble over grave sites.

Different nationalities have particular traditions in the kinds of plants used on or around the graves.

In Italy Roses, Myrtle, Orange and Jasmine are popular and the Periwinkle is used to deck the graves of children who have died in infancy and is known as the Fior di Morto or Flower of Death. The Chinese use Roses, Lycoris and Anemone; in Germany Dianthus is often found and in France the Box. In India a sacred character is attributed to the flowers of Champak or Port Wine Plant, *Michelia figo* and the Tamarisk (*Tamarix*) is called Yamachitika which means 'messenger of Yama' (the Indian god of death).

Herbs and brightly coloured flowers have always been a means of expressing tribute to the dead (e.g. wreaths and the floral motifs engraved on monuments) and suggest the casual assumption that paradise is a place of fragrant and beautiful flowers. Asphodel was used on the graves of Greeks and Romans as a symbol of the future life and it was thought that the seed afforded nourishment to the dead.

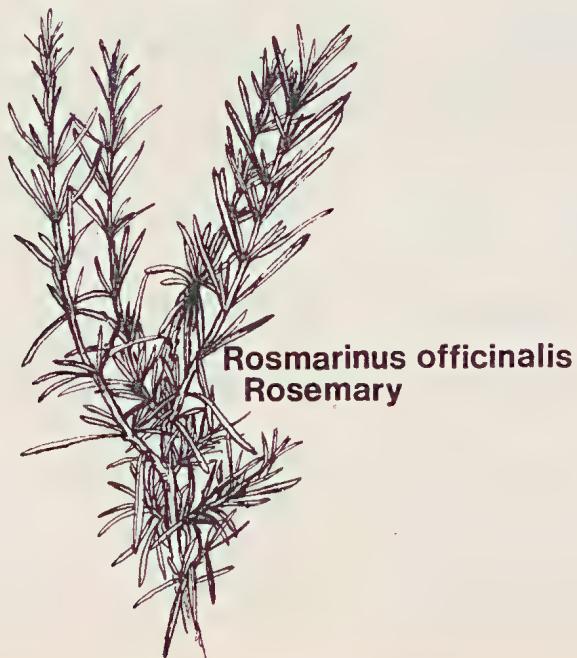
The poppy is sometimes considered a symbol of death from its narcotic property of sending people to sleep.

Roses have been widely used at the graveside in many countries and, though they have lost much of their earlier symbolism, are probably the most popular present-day tribute. They were often placed at the graveside of a young girl who died before marriage.

Plants are a part of many of the festivals within the church calendar - most obvious of these are those used to decorate the church at Christmas (holly, ivy, bay and Arbor-vitae), easter (daffodils), May-day (hawthorn) and palms on Palm Sunday. No doubt some of the plants found in churchyards were once planted there as a ready supply for such occasions.

The romantic movement in painting and literature took much of the sting out of the churchyard, replacing its frequently ominous folklore with an air of exciting mystery and sentiment.

It is doubtful if any independent Australian traditions have developed concerning the significance of native plants other than from aboriginal mythology, although a 'language' of native plants has been published in which *Eucalyptus viminalis* denotes sadness.



I.4 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF BEECHWORTH PUBLIC GARDENS AND CEMETERY

Within the first year of the establishment of Beechworth as a gold-mining town in 1852, reserves were set aside as public amenities. There followed during the 1860s and 1870s a concerted attempt at the beautification of the town. As a result Beechworth provides us with some of the finest examples of mid-nineteenth century tree planting in the State of Victoria.

During the 1860's the Mental Hospital (Mayday), the Ovens and Murray Home, Baarmutha Park and the cemetery were all planted with the popular conifers so characteristic of this period *Araucaria*, *Cupressus* and *sequoiadendron*, many excellent specimens of which still remain.

It is a Mr. Jenkyns who is attributed with specific plantings of the 1807's. From his collection of 200 or so trees and shrubs he planted out the grounds of the Ovens District Hospital in 1874; many excellent trees can be seen here including Cedars, Araucarias and a Californian Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) thought to be one of the best in the Commonwealth. The following year he laid out the Town Hall Gardens with its remarkable avenue of *sequoiadendron giganteum*, the Wellingtonia or Big Tree and many others. A number of these are thought to have been a gift from the Director of the Melbourne Royal Botanic Gardens, Baron von Mueller. The value of trees within the landscape was clearly appreciated from the earliest days, the first planting in these gardens being made by the President of the Tree Planting Committee, Councillor Telford. It is also about this time that the avenues of street trees were planted.

With the turn of the century there were further parks established and planted; Wallace Park in 1897 and Victoria Park in 1902 (previously the Botanical Reserve). Both of these have superb trees, most notable being the rare and unusual pines in Victoria Park, fourteen of which were planted at its initiation by the twelve councillors who were then in office.

The Beechworth cemetery is of particular horticultural and design interest. Its site was first chosen in 1854 by the Government Surveyor, was formed and the first to be interred were those that had been previously buried in the town's graveyard which had been situated first on Asylum Hill and then on the land now occupied by the Independant Church and offices of the Murray Advertiser. It was first gazetted as a public cemetery on 4th November, 1861. A Turkish-style ornamental fountain manufactured by Messrs. Danks & Co. of Melbourne was introduced in 1900 at a cost of 100 and was probably selected with Turkish cemeteries in mind, where the "beautification of the surrounding grounds was looked upon as a sacred duty" (part of address given by Mr. A.A. Billson when fountain was instigated). During this time the area was also enlarged and in all probability the original tree planting would have been at its best, despite problems caused by impaired drainage. By 1906 it was thought to be one of the most picturesque burial grounds in the provinces (Advertiser).

### Letter to the Editor

From Peter Watts, Sydney.

In the list of gardens designed by Guilfoyle which you published in the Summer 1982 issue of your journal, I failed to include one most important garden.

According to *An Australian Story 1837-1907* (1962) by Maie Casey, her grandfather's garden, *Derriweit Heights*, at Mt. Macedon was designed by William Guilfoyle. It was 23 acres in extent and photographs of it in the Latrobe Library collection in Melbourne record it as a garden of astonishing complexity. Being at Mt. Macedon, it was a true Hill Station garden and it seems that Guilfoyle and the garden owner, stock and station agent Charles Ryan, filled it with a rich collection of plants. The soil and climate at Mt. Macedon must be one of the most perfect gardening climates in this country and Maie Casey recalls plants being brought from Japan, India, America and many other places.

The enormous house, which still survives, was probably designed by John Beswicke. A watercolour of the house and part of its garden was still owned by Beswicke's elderly son about 10 years ago. Sadly it was probably destroyed along with Beswicke's drawing collection in recent years.

But even sadder is the loss of the *Derriweit Heights* garden itself. Although in part neglected for much of this century it was entirely lost in 1970 when it gave way to an appalling subdivision and is now swamped by small brick villas. How many more of the great hill station gardens of Macedon will be sacrificed in this way?

It is imperative that an authoritative list of important historic gardens be prepared in order to prevent such tragedies in the future. Often owners themselves, let alone local planning authorities, are unaware of the importance of their own gardens and it is only by preparing such a list that the attention of all interested parties can be drawn to this gradually diminishing component of our national estate. It may not be possible to save all these gardens, but at least once they are identified the various options to encourage their retention can be explored.

The Australian Garden History Society should pursue this objective with the fullest vigour.



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